

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

The Huaqiao Warriors, by Yuk-wai

Review Author: Conrado E. Olazo, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 45, no. 4 (1997): 584–585

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

In *Dulaang Hiligaynon*, readers get a modest serving—perhaps only a little bite—of vernacular drama, but a bite delectable enough to whet the appetite for more of the various flavors—sometimes tangy, other times bitter, but always tasty—of Hiligaynon literature in general. Perhaps, it will invite others to retrieve old texts or else to concoct new ones. As it is, the book certainly forms a promising part of the complete *carte du jour* of the banquet yet to be served that is Philippine literature.

Jonathan Chua
Interdisciplinary Studies Program
Ateneo de Manila University

The Huaqiao Warriors: Chinese Resistance in the Philippines, 1942–1945. By Yung li Yuk-wai. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1996. 224 pages.

The Philippine Chinese community has often been recognized as an important and influential sector in the economic life of our country. However, hardly anything is said about their contribution in the shaping of the socio-political dimension of the emerging Philippines. Little is known or written about their activities outside the area of commerce. It is a prevalent perception among Filipinos that the Chinese immigrants are far removed from the crucial struggles that helped shape the identity of our country. Hence "[the Chinese immigrants] tend to disappear when it comes to political history, especially those great crucibles in which the nation's identity was forged, the Revolution and the Second World War" (ix).

Yung Li Yuk-wai's work fulfills, to a certain extent, the need of the Philippine Chinese community to articulate their particular role in one of the most destructive and painful moments in the history of our nation, the Japanese Occupation during the Second World War. The book is a welcome addition to the short list of literature dealing with the Chinese resistance in the wartime Philippines. But before giving an account of the military expeditions of the "Huaqiao Warriors" from 1942–1945, the author first analyzes the situation and the characteristics of the Chinese community prior to the war. This information is important because it sheds light on the varied responses of the different groups within the Chinese community when the war came. The term "Huaqiao" refers to the "Overseas Chinese," which implies continued (Chinese) nationality" (xii).

In the preface, the author states the difficulties she faced. The first was the scarcity of source materials, and the second, the abundance of primary materials written after the war whose reliability was questionable. Despite these limitations, she claims that "research value exists in the study of materials of these types" (xiv). The author approaches the subject in an analyti-

cal and objective manner, aware of the many contradictions in her sources, as "she tries to assess dispassionately the sources, strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese resistance movement during the Japanese Occupation of the Philippines" (x).

The book is divided into five parts. The first treats the Philippine Chinese community at the outbreak of the war. It contains a statistical report on the prewar Chinese community in the Philippines. But more than the tables and the numbers, what stands valuable here are the analyses of the origin of the Chinese resistance spirit and the factors that contributed to its intensification. This part of the book tries to answer an important question: "Why did the Chinese in the Philippines choose to resist the Japanese rule?" (15). According to the author, it was unlikely for the Philippine Chinese to fight for the Filipinos, judging from the Filipino-Chinese relations over the centuries. The Chinese were generally regarded as a "marginal trading community...they perform vital economic functions, but they are not integrated, nor do they desire to be, into the society" (15).

It is interesting to note that at the outbreak of the Second World War, anti-Japanese feeling among the Philippine Chinese community had been present for almost a decade. The hatred of the Japanese "formed the very foundation of the resistance spirit" (25). The motivation to resist the Japanese rule has something to do either with the survival of the Chinese community, or was itself an extension of the Sino-Japanese conflict.

The second part of the book gives us an idea of the prewar organizations and leadership of the Chinese community in the country. Yung Li Yuk-wai observes that the Philippine Chinese community was highly divided. Attempts at greater unity occurred with the emergence of the "Salvation" organizations, but they were not totally freed from rivalries and divisions. Moreover, the crisis of leadership in the Philippine Chinese community during the Japanese Occupation only managed to deepen the division. While the traditionalist preferred passive resistance, the *Guomindang*, the Chinese Nationalist party, and the *Hua Zhi* (Wha-Chi) of the Chinese Communist Party, took the path of radical resistance. The *Guomindang* and the *Hua Zhi* formed the backbone of the Chinese resistance movement in the Philippines.

In the third and fourth parts of the book, the author focuses on the two major Chinese guerrilla forces during the Japanese Occupation. The third part is concerned with the leftist guerrilla forces, particularly the *Hua Zhi*, which teamed up with the local communist guerrilla unit, the Hukbalahap. The fourth part deals with the rightist Chinese guerrilla forces. The author points out that the leftist guerrillas "had greater achievement and enjoyed a better fame than the *Guomindang* guerrillas" (105). The rightist resistance movement, on the other hand, suffered greater losses because of the division and rivalries within the movement.

Finally, in the fifth part, the author takes up the impact of the resistance movement to the postwar Chinese community in the Philippines. Yung Li

Yuk-wai comes to the conclusion that the war had not much of an impact to the Chinese community.

The three years of Japanese Occupation was more an interruption than a transformation of the history of the Philippine Chinese. After the unsettled years of 1945–1946, the Philippine Chinese community was largely restored to its form of the prewar era. The traditional allocation of power, the conflicts and alignments of various groups and the economic and social structure inside the Chinese community remained basically unchanged. (183)

Yung li Yuk-wai admits that her attempt at studying the Chinese resistance movement in the Philippines is not a finished work. Much is needed to be done in this field of Philippine Chinese history. However, the book has done an invaluable service to the Chinese and the larger Philippine community by filling in the gaps in this particular segment of our country's history.

Conrado E. Olazo, S.J.
Loyola House of Studies
Ateneo de Manila University

The Twisted Road to Freedom: America's Granting of Independence to the Philippines. By Keith Thor Carlson. Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1995.

Despite the prior publication of several accounts of Philippine independence, the book of Keith Carlson remains original and informative. It views the decolonization of the Philippines on 4 July 1946, from the inter-relatedness of the issues of trade and collaboration, and the human factors involved in the process. The book suggests two compelling issues preceding the granting of independence. First, the controversial trial of collaborators and second, the legislation and enactment of the Trade Act in connection with the rehabilitation program.

The Filipino upper class continued their domination over their own lower classes by collaborating with the Japanese forces in World War II. When the Americans returned, then President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared that those who assisted the Japanese during their occupation would be stripped of economic and political influence. But it did not come as easy as that. General McArthur, the appointed military advisor of the Commonwealth who had full discretion in the postwar governance of the Philippines, was a *compadre* of the collaborators, headed by the prominent Manuel Roxas. McArthur re-kindled old friendships and did the collaborators an incredible favor by helping them dominate the country again.